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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 CIEP-01 CEA-01

STR-04 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 H-02 SAJ-01

ACDA-05 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 TRSE-00 /086 W
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R 120814Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7760
INFO AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1341

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: BBAK, EINV, PFOR, PGOV, NL
SUBJECT: LOCKHEED AND THE PRINCE

1. SUMMARY: DUTCH COMMISSION OF INQUIRY (DONNER COMMISSION) IS MOVING AHEAD RAPIDLY IN ITS INVESTIGATION OF PRINCE BERNHARD'S TIES TO LOCKHEED. PRESS CONTINUES TO GIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO STORY, AS PRINCE LIMITS PUBLIC APPEARANCES. DUTCH POLITICIANS EXPRESS UNEASE OVER OUTCOME. END SUMMARY

2. IN PREPARATION FOR OPENING ITS INVESTIGATION IN THE UNITED STATES, DONNER COMMISSION ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK THAT 20 PEOPLE,
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INCLUDING PRESENT AND FORMER DUTCH CABINET MINISTERS, HAD BEEN

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QUESTIONED ALREADY, AND THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS WERE BEING STUDIED. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE COMMISSION SAID THAT AN INTENSIVE PACE WAS BEING MAINTAINED AND THAT MEMBERS HOPED TO MAKE REPORT TO GOVERNMENT BY APRIL 15. (WE ASSUME ANY REPORT ISSUED BY THEN WOULD BE ON INTERIM BASIS.) NO LEAKS HAVE DEVELOPED FROM COMMISSION, AND NO ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE AS TO WHAT WITNESSES ARE BEING ASKED OR, IN MOST CASES, WHO THEY ARE.

3. ROYAL FAMILY RETURNED FROM WINTER HOLIDAY IN AUSTRIA LAST WEEK. PRINCE HAS NOW CANCELLED TWO MAJOR VISITS THAT HE WAS TO HAVE MADE THIS SPRING--A SIX-WEEK PRIVATE VISIT TO LATIN AMERICA ON BEHALF OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (VENEZUELA, PERU, COLOMBIA, ECUADOR AND THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS) AND THE ANNUAL BILDERBERG CONFERENCE WHICH HE SPONSORS (THE SITE WAS TO HAVE BEEN AT HOT SPRINGS, VA.). OFFICIAL STATEMENT SAID THAT PRINCE CANCELLING VISITS "IN ORDER TO CONTRIBUTE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE TO THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK OF THE THREE-MAN COMMISSION." FIRST OFFICIAL PUBLIC APPEARANCES OF PRINCE BERNHARD SINCE COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED IS TO BE MARCH 16 WHEN HE WILL SPEAK TO STUDENTS AT ROTTERDAM'S ERASMUS UNIVERSITY. APPEARANCE WAS TO HAE BEEN OPEN, BUT GREAT INTEREST SHOWN BY PRESS, WHICH SAW IT AS OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION BERNHARD, HAS CAUSED GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE IT TO A PRIVATE CLOSED-DOOR AFFAIR.

4. IN ADDITION TO RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLIC APPEARANCES BY THE PRINCE, WHICH SERVE TO PROTECT HIM FROM HAVING TO GRAPPLE WITH EMBARRASSING PRESS QUESTIONS, GON HAS CLAMPED DOWN ON ROYAL FAMILY'S TRAVEL ABROAD IN GENERAL. ON FEB 8 WHEN PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL WAS PREPARING TO ANNOUNCE CREATION OF DONNER COMMISSION, HE TRIED TO BRIEF PRINCESS BEATRIX, BUT DISCOVERED SHE AND PRINCE CLAUS WERE ON A TRIP TO ITALY AND KENYA IN THE OFFICIAL GON AIRCRAFT. AS A RESULT, MEMBER OF ROYAL FAMILY WHO WISH TO USE THE AIRPLANE IN THE FUTURE WILL HAVE TO GET APPROVAL FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO HAVING AN INPUT AS TO WHETHER THE VISIT IS DESIRABLE FROM A FOREIGN POLICY STANDPOINT.

5. DUTCH PRESS CONTINUES TO DEVOTE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO STORY, BUT NEW NEWS ON THE QUESTION OF THE LOCKHEED PAYMENTS IS CONFIDENTIAL

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INCREASINGLY HARD TO COME BY. THEREFORE, RESPONSIBLE DAILY PRESS IS MORE AND MORE FORCED TO REPORT MINOR DEVELOPMENTS EMANATING FROM CHURCH SUBCOMMITTEE. WEEKLY PRESS RUNS MORE SCANDALOUS STORIES ON LINKS BETWEEN BERNHARD AND ASSORTED CHARACTERS AROUND THE WORLD (FROM EVITA PERON TO ROBERT VESCO). WEEKLIES HAVE ALSO BEEN MORE AND MORE WILLING TO DELVE INTO QUESTION OF PRINCE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FRENCHWOMAN, HELENE GRINDA. AT LEAST TWO CARRY HER PHOTOGRAPH THIS WEEK AS WELL AS ALLEGATION THAT BERN-

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HARD IS FATHER OF HER NINE-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER.

6. FOR SOME TIME NOW, WORRY HAS BEEN EXPRESSED BY THOSE CLOSE TO GON THAT DONNER COMMISSION WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO COME UP WITH DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS AND THAT SUPPORTERS OF PRINCE WOULD THEN ATTACK GOVERNMENT FOR FAILURE TO EXPRESS FULL CONFIDENCE IN HIM FROM THE START. WHILE THAT MAY STILL BE THE CASE, OPINION SEEMS TO BE GROWING THAT EVIDENCE AGAINST PRINCE MAY BE THERE AFTER ALL. HOUSE OF ORANGE LOYALISTS REPORTEDLY NOW ARGUE THAT EVEN IF HE DID TAKE MONEY, IT MUST BE FOR A GOOD CAUSE, OR THAT IT REALLY SHOULD NOT MATTER ANYWAY.

7. WE NOW ARE BEGINNING TO GET INDICATIONS THAT DUTCH SOCIALISTS BELIEVE THEY WILL BE THE BIG LOSER POLITICALLY NO MATTER WHAT DECISION THE DONNER COMMISSION REACHES. TWO LABOR PARTY PARLIAMENTARIANS TOLD EMBOFFS MARCH 10 THAT THEY HOPE THE COMMISSION WILL NOT ISSUE ITS REPORT UNTIL 1977 BECAUSE THE COUNTRY WILL BLAME PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL IF THE QUEEN SHOULD ABDICATE. EVEN THOUGH ALL GOVERNMENT PARTIES SUPPORTED THE CREATION OF THE COMMISSION, THEY EXPECT THAT TO BE FORGOTTEN AND FOR THE QUESTION OF ABDICATION (REGARDLESS OF THE FACT THAT THE PRINCE MAY BE DEEPLY IMPLICATED) TO BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE PITTING THE LEFT AGAINST THE CENTER AND THE RIGHT. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEY DID NOT RELISH THE IDEA. ONE OF THE PARLIAMENTARIANS, HIMSELF A REPUBLICAN, SAID THAT IT WAS CERTAIN THE MONARCHY ITSELF WOULD SURVIVE AND THAT EVEN MANY OPPONENTS OF THE SYSTEM FOUND THEMSELVES DEFENDING IT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES.
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